

and keep a yard light on and run a family farm are going broke in record numbers.

There is something really wrong with that. There is something wrong with a system that doesn't reward what this country should value most and that doesn't connect effort and reward. You talk about effort? You know, family farmers are the ones who invest everything they have, work hard, risk everything they have, and then discover at the end of it that they don't have the capability of continuing. And this country has a policy that says that is fine; we don't care about that?

We are going to have a big fight in this Chamber this summer to see who cares. Some people may say they don't care. Or they may say they care, but they have constructed these goof-ball policies and they just want to stand over in a corner and chant about free markets. That is one solution, I guess. But that solution will simply continue this decline, this spiral of failing our family farms.

But there are other ways to address this. One is for this Congress to write a simple farm plan that starts with one single sentence, and that sentence says: The purpose of this farm bill is to maintain a network of family farms in this country.

Otherwise, you will have corporate agri-factories farm from California to Maine. There won't be anybody living in the country, and the price of food will go up. That can happen and probably will happen unless this country decides that family farmers are in this country's best interests. Thomas Jefferson used to say that it is in this country's best interests to maintain a broad network of ownership in this country. Broad-based economic ownership is critical to the success of this country.

Even if one doesn't care about family farmers, one ought to care about the disparity that exists here. We should care about the massive failure at the bottom of the system affecting people who really produce real things, and the orgy of mergers that is occurring at the top with the big getting bigger.

One of the things that bothers me the most about all of this is the people who are out there raising a kernel of wheat or corn or barley to take it to the market are the very ones who are failing. And then everybody else who gets hold of that seems to be making record profits. Go to the grocery store and buy a box of cereal and look at the price. Somebody took that kernel of wheat or corn or grain of rice and they might have puffed it. Now that it is made into puffed wheat, does its price bear any relationship to the price that the farmer gets for the wheat? No, not at all. The farmer gets a pitiful price that is insufficient to keep the farmer in business. But those who process it, those who haul it, those who puff it, those who crisp it, those who shred it, they are all making record profits. There is something wrong with that. There is something wrong with the method by which this system values what people contribute to our economic system.

Some people might say to me, "Gee, you come from North Dakota and you have a different view of economics. You didn't go to the University of Chicago, the School of Economics; you don't understand free markets," and so

on. No, I understand it. I understand the difference between the theory, the chanting and all the nonsense and the reality that exists every day confronting people who produce every day.

So I know there will be some in this Chamber who will be upset this summer that we are going to push them very hard on these policies. Those of us who have other ideas and believe there is a better way and different approach and believe there is a way for this Congress to stand up for family farming. We need to say to our family farmers, just as the Europeans have said to their family farmers and other countries have said to theirs, that you matter. Your presence as a producer, as a family farmer in this country, makes a difference to us. It strengthens this country. It nurtures this country.

The formation of family values in America always came from family farms. The seed bed of family values came from family farms. They have rolled into small towns and rolled into the cities, nurturing and refreshing the family values of this country. So, therefore, family farming matters. It is more than just dollars and cents, and it is more than just economics. Family farming, as an economic and social policy, matters in this country.

Those who have currently gained the upper hand politically on this issue have constructed a farm policy that says, "We are going to pull the rug out from under you even as we negotiate bad trade agreements. We are going to pull the rug out from under you on support and there will be no disaster programs for massive crop disease." Those folks are not going to like what some of us feel we must do this summer to try to force the issue to deal with family farming.

Mr. President, I think of Joni Flaten, a 38-year-old woman from Langdon, ND, who writes a letter with resignation. She and her husband have invested in their farm and in fact they are losing their farm, and they wonder what to do next. She says, "... I'm not sure if there is a lot of need for a 38-year-old combine operator/tractor driver/trucker/run for parts person and be a mother in the workforce in North Dakota." That is what you do to run a farm. Everybody does everything.

Some, I guess, as the old saying goes, understand the cost of everything and the value of nothing. That is what we have here, in my judgment. We went through this debate a couple of years ago on the Freedom to Farm bill and I was never made quite so despondent about a U-turn in public policy as I was by those who said, "Gee, family farmers really don't matter very much. We have this market system they can work in."

Everybody here knows. The statistics I have just used are not foreign to anybody here. They say to the family farmer: You operate in this market system. We understand the grain trading firms have a hammerlock on price; we understand the railroads have a hammerlock on your transportation; we understand that meat packing plants have a hammerlock on your marketing system, but, still, you go ahead and operate in the free market.

I think it would be perfectly understandable for farmers to start their tractors and gas them up and head them towards the byways and high-

ways that haul policy makers to legislative forums where they extol about a free market that doesn't exist and see if they cannot persuade them that family farming matters and that their futures and their fortunes matter as well.

We expect in the coming weeks to have discussions about a disaster program or an indemnification program, either one; about a price support program; about a range of other issues that need to be addressed, including the question of concentration in the meat packing industry and other issues. But through it all, I expect we will debate these issues in the month of July.

Now that the Senate will be back voting tomorrow, we will see work on appropriations bills. Will we see business as usual? Will we see the kind of legislative sleight of hand that I mentioned at the start of this discussion? Will we see conference committees come to the floor of the Senate in which a \$2 billion item was offered in legislative darkness that will butter the bread of the richest folks in America? Then the same people who decide they want to do that will say, "Gee, we don't have enough money to help poor people who can't afford home heating."

We will see all that kind of thing that goes on around here because people can do it, and they do it, and that is unfortunate. That is not the bright side of legislating. That is the dark side of legislating. But, hopefully, enough of us will force enough of others of us in this Chamber to confront these questions. Does farm policy work when farmers are told that whatever they get in the marketplace is all there is, and the marketplace collapses like a used accordion, and the farmers are then told, well, it's tough luck; some big corporation will come and farm all that land and America will be just as well off with an agri-factory?

In my judgment, it won't. I recognize I come from a town of 300 people in a small rural area of North Dakota. But the people who farm in North Dakota and up and down the farm belt are some of the best people in this country. They don't deserve to be whipsawed by an economic system that is unfair to them, that treats them fundamentally unfairly with respect to trade agreements and sanctions, and markets that are unfair, markets that are clogged. It is not the right way for this country to treat its family farmers.

So, again, Mr. President, in the coming couple of weeks, the leadership of the Senate should expect to confront these issues. I hope those who feel strongly about the current farm policy will bring their notebooks, bring their theory, and sharpen their chants, because they are going to have an opportunity to tell us about free markets once again. We will have an opportunity to visit about farm families who are going broke under that very same set of circumstances.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate, under the previous order, will stand adjourned until 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, July 7, 1998.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:19 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, July 7, 1998, at 9:30 a.m.